

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

### HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 1, 2014*

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the creation of United States Air Force Academy on 1 April 1954, and offer remarks to honor this youngest of our nation's service academies. Birthed in the minds of visionary post Army Air Corps leaders and the Eisenhower Administration, the Air Force Academy has become the most forward looking military institution and premiere Aerospace Military Academy imaginable during the second half of the 20th Century. Residing in the bedrock of the Colorado Rocky Mountains the United States Air Force Academy has fueled the heart, mind, and winning spirit of the U.S. Air Force by providing leaders who flew higher than its inspiring surrounding peaks.

Since its inception the U.S. Air Force Academy has produced over forty-six thousand young men and women officers and superior senior leaders across the span of six decades. These leaders provided the backbone of our Aerospace warriors, including the first Air Force ace from the Vietnam War, Captain Steve Ritchie and the first USAFA graduate to be given the Medal of Honor, Captain Lance Sijan. Since that era one hundred and eighty one graduates have given their lives in defense of our Nation. The lifeblood of the USAF leadership has flowed from the Academy over the decades, with contributions of 598 General officers and five Air Force Chiefs of Staff. As the premier academy to explore the final frontier of space the Academy has produced 38 Astronaut Graduates and continues to produce numerous strategic leaders in the military space arena.

The Air Force Academy has a longstanding tradition of producing both highly qualified and committed military officers combined with superbly educated college graduates from its halls of academic excellence. Over the years the Academy produced 37 Rhodes Scholars and the institution continues to be highly ranked in national college reviews such as *Forbes* and *US News and World Report* over more than three decades. Over the years the institution has scored in the top 100 of American colleges in numerous ranking publications. In college athletics USAFA competes in 17 NCAA sports conferences and continually performs extremely well in its various divisions. The Air Force Academy has won the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy on the gridiron 18 times, far surpassing the other Service Academies and brining national publicity to this Colorado institution.

Since its inception the United States Air Force Academy has continually trained, educated, and inspired young men and women to become leaders of character with the motivation to serve as Air Force career officers. It continues into its sixth decade of institutional defense contributions to the Nation by providing a unique blend of academic curriculum, military training, and leadership and physical development. This institution has become a historical wellspring of Air Force military lead-

ership which will continue to develop future generations to defend our precious United States of America. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to recognize our USAFA landmark as it contributes to the security of our democracy from its position anchored in the foothills of the Colorado Rockies.

HONORING PETER J. WIRS

### HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 1, 2014*

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I join my friend and colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) in drawing attention to an event that is set to unfold on April 17 at USA Wrestling's National Open in Las Vegas, where Mr. Peter J. Wirs is set to become what I am told is the oldest person ever to step onto an international freestyle wrestling mat for his very first competitive match.

I was fortunate to be involved in the sport of wrestling from an early age. I know from personal experience just how much dedication and discipline the sport requires. When my teammates and I wrestled, we faced certain challenges, but the challenges Pete Wirs faces next month are far different: He is 59 years old, has suffered a heart attack and two strokes, and has diabetes.

While my colleague from Pennsylvania spoke about the importance of Mr. Wirs overcoming diabetes to wrestle, I would also note the corollary: He chose wrestling as the sport to overcome diabetes.

Wrestling is demanding. Who wins and who loses is decided solely by the two individuals squaring off on the mat. People have different opinions about what percent of training is physical and what percent is mental, but everyone agrees that wrestling is an incredibly demanding sport, both physically and emotionally.

Former Speaker Dennis Hastert, a former wrestling coach, often commented on the courage, discipline, and perseverance that wrestling demands. Paraphrasing the old introduction to ABC's *Wide World of Sports*, wrestling demonstrates the "thrill of victory and the agony of defeat."

That will be very important to remember on April 17, when Pete Wirs steps onto the mat. From one wrestler to another and one public official to another, I wish him the best of luck.

Mr. Speaker, you may remember that the International Olympic Committee's executive board voted last year to expel wrestling from the Summer Games. Thanks to the outcry from ordinary citizens from across America and around the world, the IOC General Assembly ultimately reversed the board's decision and reinstated the sport. But this decision gives wrestling only a temporary reprieve. It is still on probation, with its status in the future facing further challenges.

Our country should celebrate the thousands of amateur athletes who train for and compete in the sport of wrestling. Today, I am honored to commend Pete Wirs and all who rise to the challenge.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF COLONEL ROBERT K. THOMPSON, USAF

### HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 1, 2014*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Colonel Robert K. Thompson upon the occasion of his retirement after 29 years of honorable service to our great Nation in the United States Air Force and Air Force Reserve.

Colonel Thompson received his Air Force commission in 1985 as a distinguished ROTC graduate from Indiana University. After receiving his commission, he began an impressive career as a public affairs officer—a career that spanned nearly three decades and brought him to all corners of the world. Colonel Thompson's final assignment at Headquarters, United States Air Force, Pentagon, Washington, D.C., as the Chief of Public Affairs for the Policy Integration Directorate, Office of Air Force Reserve, was in direct support of the Chief of Air Force Reserve, where he helped fulfill mission directives for more than 70,000 reservists at 34 wings and 12 groups.

Throughout his myriad deployments in Central and South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and in the United States, Colonel Thompson championed America's First Amendment rights and goodwill in war zones and disaster areas. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, he expedited the story and video of the airstrike that killed al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. As NATO's top spokesman in Bosnia, he communicated the coalition's commitment to the Dayton Peace Accord and coalition efforts to remove landmines, disarm former combatants and capture war criminals leading to the arrest of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. Utilizing his experience and success as a public affairs officer, Colonel Thompson wrote the first draft of the Department of Defense's media plan for Operation Enduring Freedom, which helped inform the American people while also protecting operational security. At home, Colonel Thompson escorted FOX, CNN, and CBS aboard the Air Force's first-responder helicopters to cover the Winter Olympics in Utah and rescue operations during Hurricane Katrina, ultimately writing the plans for release of information critical for the general public to understand military disaster relief operations. Additionally, Colonel Thompson orchestrated better insight into our humanitarian efforts in Japan, Libya, and Haiti, where we helped open schools, medical clinics and the first transnational road built coast-to-coast by the U.S. military in Honduras.

In his most recent position as Chief of Public Affairs, Colonel Thompson played an integral role in Congressional proceedings relating to life-cycle manpower costs and force shaping. He also worked to provide input to our Nation's highest military and civilian leaders and informed the public on important Air Force developments, with more than 100 published news articles viewed by millions. Colonel Thompson's efforts have also been critical to implementing new laws and policies supporting combat veterans, reservists, their civilian employers, and their families, and championing increased utilization of an operational reserve.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress and a grateful Nation, my wife Vicki and I extend our deepest appreciation of Colonel Thompson for his many years of dedicated service. There is no question that the Air Force, Department of Defense, and the United States benefitted greatly from Colonel Thompson's visionary leadership, planning, and foresight, and we wish him and his wife, Pam, the very best.

SANFORD HIGH SCHOOL MEN'S  
BASKETBALL TEAM

**HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 1, 2014*

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Sanford High School men's basketball team and their coach, Rhett Larsen. Sanford's Indians claimed their sixth Class 2A state basketball title, with their previous titles coming in 1950, 1951, 1978, 1996, and 2006.

Sanford finished the season with a remarkable 26–1 record, capping it off with a championship win over Akron, 55–51 at the Colorado State University-Pueblo Massari Arena. The team made 17 free throws in the fourth quarter, making nine free throws in the final two minutes to clinch the victory.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Sanford's basketball team and their coach, Rhett Larsen. Under Coach Laresn's expert guidance, I have no doubt that Sanford will win many more state titles. I look forward to this group of young men's future successes on and off the basketball court.

HONORING PETER WIRS

**HON. ROBERT A. BRADY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 1, 2014*

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Peter Wirs, a friend and a neighbor, who will soon become the first diabetic and oldest individual to step into an international freestyle wrestling mat at this year's USA Wrestling's National Open, taking place in Las Vegas on April 17. Peter Wirs currently serves as the 59th Republican Ward Leader in Philadelphia.

But despite what Peter has accomplished, diabetes continues to be an epidemic. One in 12 Americans has diabetes, and an additional one in 3 Americans is at risk for developing the disease. Every 17 seconds, another individual is diagnosed with diabetes. Shockingly, this disease kills more Americans every year than breast cancer and AIDS combined. The American Diabetes Association's latest research estimates the total costs of diagnosed diabetes have risen to \$245 billion in 2012 from \$174 billion in 2007, when the cost was last examined, representing a 41 percent over a five-year period. Diabetes costs severely impact American productivity, let alone billions in healthcare costs.

Pete Wirs could have given up ten years ago. When I first met Pete Wirs he weighed 250 lbs. Today, he weighs 180 lbs. He exercises at 5:30 in the morning every day, fol-

lowed by drills and wrestling holds and moves practice every night after work at the Pennsylvania Wrestling Club headquarters, located in my District.

Mr. Speaker, we don't know whether Leader Wirs will win or lose his first match. But no matter what the final score ends up being, Pete Wirs will have scored a moral victory by simply stepping onto the mat, by getting his diabetes under control, and by proving to all of us that physical fitness is not a diet or a fad, but a life-long commitment to healthy eating, continuous exercise, and sports activity.

Mr. Speaker, Pete Wirs remains an inspiration to all diabetics and indeed to all of us who should be exercising and participating in sports and recreation. I join my colleague, Congressman JIM JORDAN, in congratulating Leader Wirs, and all of his fellow team members, coaches and boosters in what is sure to be a sports event for the history books.

IN MEMORY OF BERNADINO CRUZ,  
JR., AND HIS PASSION FOR EDU-  
CATION, MUSIC, AND THE  
SOUTHWEST DETROIT COMMU-  
NITY

**HON. GARY C. PETERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 1, 2014*

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of Bernadino Cruz, Jr., an educator, a musician and a community activist in Southwest Detroit.

As an educator, Mr. Cruz shared his love of music and the learning process with his students as a music teacher at Burt Elementary and then at Cesar Chavez Academy. In each instance, he took his love of music and focused that passion into connecting his students with the importance of their education. At Burt Elementary, Mr. Cruz not only directly tied the music department programming into the school's curriculum, but also took the initiative to expand the array of programming available to students by establishing a concert choir. At Cesar Chavez, Mr. Cruz continued his track record of dedication to his students by establishing an instrumental music program and a touring bilingual concert choir. As an honor and testament to the remarkable impact Mr. Cruz made on the students at Cesar Chavez, the new media center at its high school will be dedicated to him.

After more than six years as a teacher, Mr. Cruz stepped into a new educational role as Assistant Principal at the Hope of Detroit Academy. In this position, he continued his commitment to engage his students in the educational process. His responsibilities included overseeing the entire school curriculum, management of day-to-day operations and management of student body behavior.

Furthermore, Mr. Cruz's passion for learning did not stop with his students—it is a value that he practiced in his own life as he continued to seek more knowledge in the field of education. Following his Bachelor of Arts in Music from Wayne State University, Mr. Cruz went on to receive additional certifications in education and education administration from Wayne State and Marygrove College in Detroit. With each new skill he developed, Mr. Cruz furthered his mission to empower his students with a quality education.

As a musician, Mr. Cruz shared his passion for music with the Southwest Detroit community in many ways. In addition to his role as a music teacher in the field of education, Mr. Cruz served as a music teacher at the Most Holy Redeemer Church and used his musical talents to support many causes focused on strengthening the Southwest Detroit community. Working together with his brother Mauro, Mr. Cruz also sought to build bridges of cultural understanding by taking traditional Latin music and incorporating new rhythms and styles that helped youth better connect to both their identity and heritage.

Mr. Speaker, leaders, educators and artists, like Mr. Bernadino Cruz, Jr., are so important to ensuring the success of the communities we represent. Mr. Cruz showed a passion and dedication for education, music and the Southwest Detroit community that have inspired so many to make a difference in their community. I join the Southwest Detroit community, and all whose lives have been influenced by Mr. Cruz and his enthusiasm, in the sadness that is felt for his loss. However, I know that his family can take comfort in the incredible difference he has made in the lives of so many people, and the inspiration his legacy will continue to instill in future generations.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF LEONARD  
WASSERMAN

**HON. MARCY KAPTUR**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 1, 2014*

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Leonard J. Wasserman of Oregon, Ohio, who passed from this life on Monday, March 10, 2014. Len Wasserman was an indefatigable and socially minded leader on many fronts, dedicating his life to the service of his country and his local community.

After graduating from Olney High School in 1944, Len served as a Sergeant in the U.S. Army during WWII. Following his service, he returned to Oregon, Ohio, to work as an engineer for Pure-Union oil, then as a chief engineer for Little Sisters of the Poor. In addition to his work as an engineer, he also enjoyed farming and continued pursuing this passion until his retirement in 2000.

In the city of Oregon, he has made an immeasurable impact through his active role in the community. He served the city in various capacities, ranging from Councilman, Mayor, member of T.M.O.C.O.G., and past chairman of the Safety Commission and the Oregon Growth Commission. Len also remained politically active throughout his life, through his involvement in the Oregon Democratic Club. He served as past president and was a lifetime member 45+ years precinct committeeman. He was also a life member of the St. Ignatius Church, serving the church in a variety of roles. Len was a member and past president of the Holy Name Society, church lector, Eucharistic minister, member and past president of St. Vincent DePaul Society, church councilman, usher, and past president of the church credit union. In addition to his involvement with the church, Len was also a member of the Christ Dunberger American Legion Post 537, where he served as chaplain and member of the color guard, V.F.W. 9816, life member of O.C.A.W. 346, Old News Boys, Eagles